

COLLEGE OF PUGET SOUND

The DOUBLE STANDARD of SEX MORALS in the UNITED STATES
and RESULTS and REMEDY therefor.

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Ellen Key in her masterpiece "Love and Ethics" says, "Sex instinct is the primal force in life about which all other forces revolve".

In this she has stated the keynote of our present situation, and it is only by considering the problem in this light that we can hope to gain any progress in the matter of sexual ethics and the control of sex passion.

From the earliest times of which we have any historical record the problem of control of physical passions has been a dominant one. In the early Greek civilization, history tells us that licentiousness and lust were constantly demanding attention. In the early Hebrew civilization similar conditions were dominant ones. Biblical references to the sinful lusts of men are numerous in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Biblical history records that very early in the population of the earth by man lusts became so excessive that God repented the creation of man and He said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth". And Noah alone was saved from the terrible flood and was used by God in repopulating the earth. And again the earth peopled by the seed of a righteous man has become enslaved in the lusts and sins attendant upon uncontrolled expression of the sex instinct.

In the time of Christ and in many passages in the New Testament the existing social conditions with the coexistent sexual evils were considered. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans warns them against these evils. Roman history presents to us the sad spectacle of a mighty empire ruined thru debauchery and sexual excesses.

Mediaeval and modern history are full of typical examples of destruction and retrogression due to the failure to control this primal force of sex instinct.

Man has been considered the master of women since early savagery days. It was the man who toiled for the food to support the woman. The male was the more vigorous and active physically. The male was the hunter, the trader, the fisher, the laborer for his mate, the woman. This environment and the demand for a more active physical life of the male developed him with the more active and robust physique. Conjoined with this more active physique was the desire for more profuse sexual activity as well. As a result the stage of barbarism ushered in polygamous living in order that man might have the desired greater sexual expression. This was considered morally fit and proper and thus we have the essence and the beginning of a double standard of sex morality. The chastity of the woman was definitely upheld but the unchastity of the man was permitted under the cloak of physical necessity. Biblical history confirms this double standard and many references prove its early existence among God's own people. The sexual ethics of those days gave sanction to such conduct.

The legalization of sex immorality has been existent in almost all countries. Modern times has seen the abolition of its legalization in some of the countries progressive in social service and social reform. In France the code of Napoleon legalized the immoral conduct of the man but not of the woman. Under this law the woman must suffer punishment as well as humiliation but the copartner in the deed, the man, could not even be apprehended and made to share in the responsibility. The law prohibited a search for the father of the illegitimate child but sent the mother to prison and further

pushed her on a downward path. It was not until the first year of the Great War that this law was expunged from the statutes of France. Practically all European countries have been in the same category with France in the legalization of this sex immorality, and the maintenance of the double standard. The past decade has seen a rapid advance. The United States has not been far advanced from European conditions and the laws of many of our states are even today such that the legalization of the double standard is practically assured. The mother of the illegitimate child is punished but it is impossible to apprehend the father. As will be considered later, this should be a point of attack against the double standard of sex morals.

From the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers until the present time the problem of sex control has been a dominant one. The Pilgrim Fathers were a religious group and yet the problem of sexual immorality was an urgent one. The ethics of religion even in its best days had not the power to control sensual passion and create total abstinence, although religion has preached continence and attempted its achievement thru spiritualization of the man for the past two thousand years. It increased in complexity and in seriousness. The problem continued to vex and puzzle our pilgrim forefathers. Punishment of offenders did not effect desired results. Nathaniel Hawthorne in the middle of the nineteenth century produced his famous book, "The Scarlet Letter," as an invective against existing moral conditions and their results. With the increasing complexities of an advancing civilization in the United States the sex evils kept pace. Sex immorality and all its attendant evils have increased at an almost disproportionate rate and present one of the most vital of our present social problems.

The horror of existing conditions aroused the medical profession to action. It was considered because of its direct bearing on the public health and extreme violent forms of its activity. The rapid

increase in the number of venereal diseases reported to the medical profession for treatment alarmed even the most listless from their apparent lethargy. The increase in the number of innocent infections from the infected husbands, and the terrible conditions among the prostitutes themselves demanded attention from the medical profession in the interest of general health. Diseases caused from sexual indulgence were first in the list of misery causing diseases. Buckley after a careful compilation of available statistics concludes in an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 1905 concludes that fifty percent of all syphilitic women are innocently infected and that eighty-five percent of all women who have syphilis have contracted it from their husbands. Morrow in his book on Social Diseases and Marriage asserts that seventy percent of the women who came to New York hospitals for venereal treatment were respectable married women infected by their husbands. The National Committee for Mental Hygiene states that one hundred percent of all cases of paresis and locomotor ataxia are directly traceable to syphilis. Among the prostitutes an even greater problem was presented for the medical profession to consider. Reports showed that as high as ninety five percent of the prostitutes in a given city were infected with either syphilis or gonorrhea or both. And reports covering the amount of infection of the men who spread the disease to their innocent wives showed that ninety percent of all sexually acquired syphilitic infections in men were derived from prostitutes, either professional or amateur. Hence the double standard of sexual ethics has directly contributed to the medical profession two of its greatest problems, infection in the prostitutes and infections in the innocent public. For it is only thru the demands of men that prostitution exists. Bishop Sumner, a member of the Illinois Vice Commission said, "It is a man's problem; men create the market, men demand the market and men

supply of victims is a man and not a woman problem- commercialized by men, supported by men, the supply of fresh victims furnished by men, men who have lost that fine instinct of chivalry and that splendid honor for womanhood where the destruction of a woman's soul is abhorrent, and where the defense of a woman's purity is truly the occasion for a valiant fight.

The past half century has witnessed a decided nation-wide campaign against the sex evils which have become intolerable and wholly unjustified. Someone's daughter or wife has had to gratify the desires of the men who claimed they could not control their sensual passions. Unprincipled men have taken advantage of the lax moral standards and prostitution in all its odious forms is the commercialized aspect of our double standard of sex morals. On no other subject has man so misused woman; at no other time does he show such contempt for her higher qualities. The seduction of innocent girls and young women under the veil of love and marriage has been a travesty upon the greatest of virtues, love- and upon our sacred ceremony of marriage.

The natural reaction against such existing conditions resulted in the simultaneous appearance of vice commissions and similar organizations in condemnation of those conditions. Public officials in conjunction religious leaders and laity has responded to the urgent call to action. The American Social Hygiene Association has been one of the most active in the campaign for a higher sexual ethics. They have trained workers and investigators traveling from city to city investigating conditions, advising and suggesting plans for social betterment and studying actual conditions in the different sections of the country. Nearly every large city has its own vice committee or commission to care for the local situation. The Bureau of Social Hygiene of New York in conjunction with the Committee

of Fourteen has done a remarkable work in New York City to clarify the vice conditions prevalent there. Their chief point of attack has been in law enforcement thru police powers and a general campaign of education. The Vice Commission of Chicago, The Vice Commission of Philadelphia, The Vice Commission of Baltimore, The Morals Efficiency Committee of Pittsburg, The Committee of Fourteen of Chicago and numerous others have been instrumental in presenting to the public the horror of existing conditions. In Chicago one of the leading clubs in action against the vice conditions was a Woman's City Club of Chicago, a club composed of the leading social workers and other prominent women of the city. The seriousness of the existing conditions has been realized by the women and they have been aroused to action. In the ultimate solution of the problem this is one of the most promising aspects, the cooperation and assistance of the women of the country.

The Vice Commission of Chicago in its report states that at the time of its investigation which was conducted in 1910 there were not far from five thousand who devoted their time wholly to the business of prostitution. The immoral girls or women, married or otherwise form a large class in Chicago. After a careful investigation concerning the average annual expenditure by the men of Chicago in the devilish business of furthering prostitution it was asserted that the annual profits in the city of Chicago alone was between fifteen and sixteen million dollars. Concerning the number of men who demand service from the prostitute, the commission in its report shows that more than five and a half million services are rendered annually.

The Vice Commission of Philadelphia in its report in 1913 says,

" This condition has no parrallel in any other city so far as we know, and our investigators, accustomed as they were to vice conditions in Chicago and New York, were astonished at the open association of worst forms of vice and innocence and the certainty of contamination which must necessarily ensue."

The Baltimore Vice Commission in its report presents perhaps the most appalling conditions yet investigated. The conditions of commercialized graft is relegated to the background and attention focused on the results of the double standard of sex morals among the respectable element of the city's population. Investigators for the American Social Hygiene Association assert that it is not too much to believe that similar conditions exist in the other large cities, and perhaps in some of them to a greater degree. W.D. Lane in summarizing the report of the Baltimore Commission sets forth the conditions as follows,

"It (referring to the commission) found supposedly typical men and women of Baltimore, the men and women who fill Baltimore's office buildings, factories and stores, who occupy Baltimore's professions, engaged in sexual immorality. It found them in high stations mixing lust with business and pleasure. It found innumerable men, seated at their desks in private offices, seducing the stenographers and other young girls who work for them. It found managers in stores making gifts to sales girls and calling them "dearie" and "sweetness". It found traveling salesmen of these same stores making nobody knows how many advances to nobody knows how many different girls in these stores. It found men arranging tempting dates with the girls who take their numbers at the telephone switchboard. It watched men preying upon the waitresses in hotels and restaurants. It located them sitting across pretty manicures in a hundred public establishments often with no other purpose than to have their hands held or their arms leaned upon or to arrange rendezvous. It found them taking women, married and single to their offices at night for immoral purposes. And it found them plentifully in character rich men-bankers, business men, supporting one or more mistresses. It found them visiting seashores and movie shows, in parks and on excursion boats and in public dance halls- in their unabashed and unrestrained pursuit of women whom they could bend to their own illicit wills.

And it found the supposedly respectable women of Baltimore in numbers less large, but large enough to cause even greater surprise, soliciting attentions of these men, meeting the men halfway or succumbing to the amorous attentions of these men. It found many girls young and pretty, subjected to undue pressure from employers; sometimes the girls were able to resist but often they were blinded by gifts and promises and they yielded. It found girls completing an evening's amusement by visits to furnished rooms and then lying to their parents at home.

It found them in every kind of compromising relation, unmarried yet kept by two or three men; making one man believe they were loyal to him when in reality they were mistresses to several. It found married women promiscuously immoral and sometimes with the consent of their husbands,

All this and more the commission found, not with respect to men and women whom everybody knew to be immoral but with respect to people whom nobody knew to be immoral.

surrounding all the clandestine immorality the commission found a gigantic and recognized machinery of immorality. Out of the 796 "furnished rooms" investigated the commission found that 622 plainly cater to immorality and 55 are doubtful. Among the 118 apartment houses all were questionable. Hotels either encouraged or winked at the illicit use of their rooms. Cafes and restaurants were used as stamping grounds of solicitation. And over and above all this the commission found it supported by a colossus of political corruption and protection".

As previously stated, investigators have declared that it is not too much to believe that similar or even worse conditions exist in many of our large cities. Menacing conditions exist in our present civilization and the vice commissions have acted as a mirror to show us our real selves. Even the most liberal has been horrified at the conditions as reported by these commissions. And at the base of it all is the sanctioned sensual passion of man uncontrolled because of our present double standard of sex morals.

The importance of the chastity of women has been recognized from the earliest times. Now it is time to teach man the importance of his chastity. William Jennings Bryan in his speech before the Nebraska Legislature in behalf of the movement to adopt a single standard of morals, said, "Man and woman will stand side by side before the judgment bar of God; if they must stand on equality there, we should not give one of them the advantage over the other in the tribunals which man creates." His movement in Nebraska to incorporate a definite statement concerning the double standard of sex morals in their revised constitution of the state was perhaps the first legislative movement of any definiteness on this subject. Even tho his movement was apparently unsuccessful it created a much needed discussion and was a decided step forward toward awakening the national consciousness on this subject. The signs of a change in moral standards were apparent even before the war and have developed rapidly since then. Every country during the Great War faced the seriousness of sexual immorality and its manifold com-

plexities. In the experience of every country three facts stand out.
(1) Demand for expert treatment by skilled and trained workers.
(2) Demand for thoro and honest education in sex matters by medical workers and trained laymen. (3) Emphasis upon ethical as well as physical element in combating the evil. Ex-president Eliot of the American Social Hygiene Association said,

"We have got to remove this evil or this country will not be ruled by the race that is now here. The family life of the white race is at stake in its purity, healthfulness and fertility.
"We have tried a policy of silence and the policy of segregation but there is no cure except the observance by men of the same standards that all races demand of their women."

No longer can we afford to be careless of the life of the future. The welfare of the child is the biggest consideration of today. A new sense of responsibility- responsibility not to punish sin, but to prevent sin, is surely dawning on our social conscience. A change in sexual ethics must impress upon the man his duty in preserving the purity and sanctity of womanhood and motherhood. And in those cases where the unrestrained exercise of sensual passion has resulted in the birth of an illegitimate child the father of the child must be made to feel the responsibility he has incurred and to suffer the shame and humiliation of the sin equally with the mother. Also he must be compelled to assume his share of the responsibility in the rearing of the child and thus give to the little one its proper care.

Victor Willard in considering the remedy for the evil says,

"Until the carnal nature, of man, and of woman too, be changed we shall have the ancient evil with us. Repression will mitigate it; ruthless prosecution of those who fatten on the profits of organized vice will diminish its extent; higher wages and better working and social conditions will mark a long step in advance, but the ultimate and complete solution lies in the single standard of morality for both sexes, in education and in spiritualization of men and women. It is a long road but the goal at the end is fully worth the effort and the labor it entails."

Bishop Sumner said,

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"Legal enactments cannot of themselves end the evil. The cure will be slow and gradual and education will be its principal ingredient, education that will teach the rising generation the danger that lies in sin, that will strip the tinsel glamour from the social evil and show it in all its hideous ugliness."

"Knowledge is power and power is life". Our present sexual ethics must be uplifted by knowledge. The ensign of the crusade against a double standard of sex morals must be knowledge, and the weapons must be universal education in the science of life, these weapons wielded by government in cooperation with clergy and laity.

The Chicago Vice Commission after a thoro study of existing conditions emphasize the need of education in conjunction and cooperation with other remedial agencies. In its official report it says,

"The problem of social vice cannot be solved by any sure and short method. The efforts to protect the children from evil influences require the consideration of many problems. The greatest influence in the child's life is religion. We may educate the child and improve his economic condition, but without a moral instinct he will not be a moral child. Another great factor in immorality is the taint of heredity. For this there can be but one solution, the growth in righteousness and the overcoming of immoral instinct thru religious conviction, and passing to the future generation a pure mind and a clean heart."

The spiritualization of man is undoubtedly a great factor in the solution of this problem. An appeal to the spiritual nature of man can more easily raise his moral standards than by a single handed appeal to his intellect alone. The British Royal Commission on Vice in their report on remedial agents for existing conditions emphasize this phase of the teaching. They maintain that the greatest emphasis should be laid upon the moral and spiritual consideration and not merely upon the physical consequences. Hence the clergy must exert a great influence in the dilemma. But it would be unwise for the clergy to attempt the reformation alone. Their aid must be rendered in cooperation with all the other forces tending to raise the moral standards. Consistent emphasis of the

teachings of Christ concerning sex morality and of the equality of men and women in such matters will aid in awakening the moral conscience of men and their proper respect for the inviolate sanctity of womanhood. An occasional sermon on the seventh commandment as was recently given by a pastor of one of our local large churches will remind men of their moral responsibilities to womanhood. The same can be said of church lessons and professing Christians maintaining and creating vice conditions by their ownership of property for immoral purposes, should be awakened morally to the realization that they too are guilty in the sight of the Creator for being a party to the offense. And that time has come when the church must emphasize the need of its members actively working among those less fortunate who have gone on the broad highway to destruction. The Church must have a constructive program for the redemption of these elements. It cannot sit idly by and merely witness a destructive program. The content of this program is not within the scope of this paper but many books are available today dealing with the social service work of the churches. This will be a vital factor in raising the moral standard concerning sensual passion.

Another element in the solution of this vexing double standard is that of law. Every man is vitally touched by the law and the requirements of law are more forcefully impressed upon the individual. The spiritualization of man is less easy of accomplishment than is lawful guidance of his sexual habits and his attitude toward woman. It is often difficult for the clergy to get in touch with all classes of people and especially with the ones who are chiefly the cause of the evil. But the law is carried to each individual and proper officers carefully guard its violation. Thus men are forced to

take cognizance of its requirements. This element then should be one of the vital factors in the solution of the problem and should be emphasized fully. William Jennings Bryan has taken cognizance of this factor and during the Constitutional Convention for the revision of the Nebraska state constitution recently Bryan in the strongest possible terms denounced our present double standard and endeavored to get the action of the convention to incorporate in the constitution proper laws to abolish the double standard of sexual ethics and to place man and woman on the same plane. Unfortunately his ideals were not accepted but men have been forced to the stern realization of the double role they have been playing and the grave injustice they have been doing women. Bryan's proposed solution was very simple yet effective. It was a definite commitment of the law concerning vice and immorality. It would provide penalties for immorality to be enforced against the two sexes impartially. It would prohibit the segregation of vice and its licensing. Our present illegitimacy laws are practically equivalent to freeing the man from obligations as a father; they drive the unmarried mothers to death and prostitution but the immoral father is allowed to go free and bring ruin and distress to some other innocent woman. This has been due in large part to the fact that the men have been wholly in charge of the laws and law making and law enforcement. But the past quarter century has seen a remarkable forward movement of women and women are coming into their own. And as a direct result in many countries the laws concerning sexual ethics and sexual immorality have been advancing. This has been noticeably true in European countries. Australia, one of the most progressive of all countries has taken definite action. The double standard of sex morals has

been completely broken down and man is held just as responsible as the women. He must adequately care for the woman both before and after the birth of the child. The child takes the father's name. The loop hole that has been the source of some trouble has been the plea of exceptio plurium or "there were others". It has been difficult to find the father in some cases. By the influence of the women undoubtedly this loop hole will soon be barred.

For the most advanced legislation on this problem we have to turn to Scandinavia and particularly Norway. In Norway in 1909 a bill was presented to adequately care for the problem. It met with stern opposition and it was not until 1915 that it was adopted. It aimed to give every child two parents and to equalize illegitimate and legitimate children in the sight of the law. The title of the bill, "Law Concerning Children Whose Parents Have Not Married Each Other," is itself suggestive of its content. It does two things in particular, (1) puts the illegitimate child on an equal footing before the law with the legitimate child, (2) places the responsibility upon both the father and the mother equally. It is with this second phase of the law that we are particularly concerned. The law adequately and effectively cares for those cases in which the paternity of the child cannot be fixed owing to the loose character of the mother or for other reasons. Fatherhood of such children is established in the following simple manner: Where it is not possible to fix with certainty the man who is the begetter of the child, the responsibilities and obligations of the father shall rest upon any man who has had sex relations with the mother at such a time that in the course of nature he might be the father of her child. In those cases where several men may be involved each is equally responsible and must meet all expenses of preg-

nency and confinement.

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The far reaching effects of this law cannot be overestimated. It stops the loophole of the Australian law and prevents the plea of "there were others". Profligacy and anonymous parenthood has at last been officially recognized as a crime. The only excuse and plea now in Norway is that the man can say that he has had no sexual intercourse with the woman. It has been declared that this law closes one of the widest doors of profligacy. The psychological effect such a law would have upon the actions of men toward women is very evident. Hence the value of such a law cannot be overestimated and as a solution to the problem in the United States such a law would be a great step forward in moral legislation and moral reform.

The third and last vital element in the solution of the problem is that of proper education and instruction in sex hygiene and a rational sex life. Havelock Ellis states the situation clearly in his words,

"The child at its mother's knee is not too young to hear from her lips the sacred facts concerning his own origin; in a few years indeed he will be too old, for he will have learnt those facts from a worse source, perhaps in the gutter; and instead of being beautiful to him as they might and could be, they will be merely dirty."

At the age of puberty every mentally active child begins to wonder about the mysteries of sex and birth. If they are not taught concerning these things they will get them from unreliable sources and will have polluted ideas concerning them. Unable to explain the forces germinating in their nature, these children are hindered and crushed by the sham decencies and complacent morality that greet their blind gropings. Never was a more powerful indictment made against the sham of our educational system as a preparation for life.

It is generally agreed today that we need a revised educational system which will include proper and limited sex instruction. The plan of silence has been practised in the past and has been a blind mistake. Radicals and conservatives all agree that we must solve the problem in the main by education but their methods differ. It is not in the scope of this paper to discuss the various methods. Suffice it to say that education is one of the vital factors in the solution. Our present sexual ethics must be uplifted by knowledge. And we must teach our youth that a healthy and natural exercise of the human organism is a precious blessing that must not be squandered and recklessly defiled.

In recapitulation we say that the solution of the problem lies chiefly in these three factors, first spiritualization of man second, adequate and revised laws concerning bastardy and illegitimacy, and third and adequate and constructive program of education on sex hygiene and sex morals.